The Secret Summer

Original title: Baked Beans for Breakfast

by RUTH CHEW

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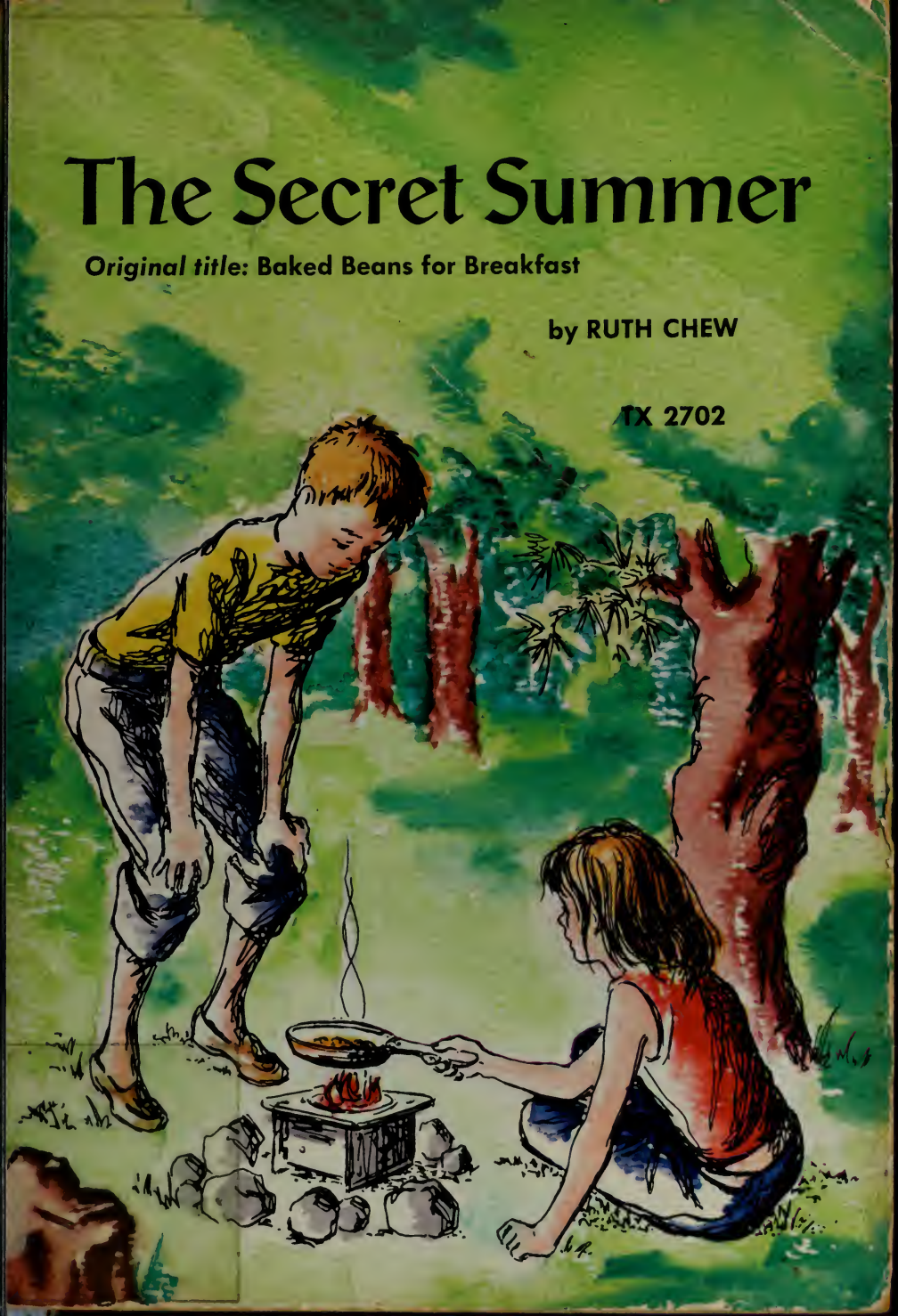

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Original title: **Baked Beans for Breakfast**

by RUTH CHEW

Illustrated by the author

SCHOLASTIC BOOK SERVICES
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3rd printing March 1974

Printed in the U.S.A.

To Anne and George
and all who helped to build
the Pine Needle Cabin

TO HAWLEY
DAM
SAND AND GRAVEL PLANT
POWER AND LIGHT CO. HEADQUARTERS
MARKERS
SAND PIT CLIFF
SPRING
BIG PINETREE
DOCKS
HIGHWAY
DIRT ROAD
GARVEY'S COTTAGES
PATH
LAUNDROMAT
GENERAL STORE
BLACK TOP ROAD
WALT'S LANDING
GAS PUMP
LAKE
OLD ROAD
PENINSULA
INLET
HIGHWAY
EPPLY ISLAND

Chapter One

"JOE, we shouldn't have run away!" Kathleen slid down in the high-backed seat of the big cross-country bus. She tucked her polo shirt into her jeans and bent over to tie her shoelaces. Her shirt pulled out again. "Joe," she said, "I want to go home."

Kathleen's brother stood on the seat and reached up into the luggage rack. He pulled a green plastic garbage sack from under two tightly rolled sleeping bags and untwisted the wire which held it shut. From between his bathing suit and a pair of blue jeans he fished half a loaf of bread, a butter knife, and a jar of peanut butter.

"Food!" said Kathleen. "You didn't tell me we had food!"

"Do you think I'd ever take you anywhere without it?" Joe said.

Joe wondered if it had been a mistake to bring Kathleen. She was two years younger than he was, and she could be such a nuisance. But Kathleen had begged to come along.

She pointed out that she had much more money than he — saved up for years in her enormous china pig. The money would be useful, and it might even be fun to have Kathleen along for company. Joe knew she hated having to spend the summer in the city just as much as he did.

It wasn't fair for Mother and Daddy to go to Europe this year instead of taking the family to the lake. It might not have been so bad if only that awful Mrs. McCafferty weren't taking care of them.

The sight of his sister munching away made Joe hungry too. He spread a slice of

bread with peanut butter. "This stuff always glues your stomach together."

"Joe, do you think Mrs. McCafferty will believe that note?" Kathleen asked.

"What did you say in it?" Joe took a large bite.

Kathleen had written the note with black Magic Marker on a big sheet of drawing paper. She had propped it against the coffee pot on the kitchen table. Now she tried to remember just what she had said. "I said something about not wanting to wake her up so early. Oh yes. Then I said, 'Granny is taking us to her house so you will have more time to take care of Tim and Beth.' Do you think she'll believe that?"

"She'll believe it," Joe said. "She loves to make pinwheels and paper dolls with them. She'd like to poison us. We had stewed tomatoes five times last week."

Joe screwed the lid on the peanut butter jar. Mrs. McCafferty was stupid all right, but was anybody stupid enough to believe that note?

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Chapter Two

"WAKE UP! We're here!" Joe was shaking Kathleen. For a moment she didn't know where she was. Then she jumped up and pulled the bags down from the rack.

Joe caught the sleeping bags as they fell. Kathleen grabbed for the two plastic sacks.

They stepped down from the bus in front of the Novelty Shop. Mr. Coburn, the owner, was standing on the sidewalk. When he saw the children he smiled. "Oh, hello there. You're a little late coming up this year."

Joe just nodded. He was afraid Mr. Coburn would start asking questions.

Joe and Kathleen loved the little town

Our Savior Lutheran School

of Hawley because it was so different from Brooklyn. Each little store on Main Avenue had a large stone pot of ruffled pink and white petunias in front of it. Two old men sat on a bench in the sun, and the town policeman walked up and down, checking the time on the penny parking meters.

"Now, what do we do?" Kathleen put the heavy sacks on the pavement.

"I've been thinking," said Joe in a low voice. "We can sleep in the pine needle cabin we built last year."

"Oh, Joe! Could we?" This was something Kathleen had always longed to do. Last summer they had worked hard building the cabin. Even Beth and Tim had helped by stuffing pine needles between the branches.

"It'll keep the rain off," Joe said. They crossed the street to Binnard's hardware store.

"Well," Mrs. Binnard said, "if it isn't the Dennis kids! What can I do for you? You're too young to need a fishing license, Joe."

Joe liked Mrs. Binnard. She never seemed to care if he looked without buying. "We're going camping," he said.

"The camping things are on those shelves in the back." Mrs. Binnard turned to wait on a man who wanted a fishing license.

In the back there were several kinds of camping stoves, gasoline lanterns, folding pots and pans, canteens, and even a portable sink.

Joe stood and looked for a long time at a fancy single-burner cookstove with legs, but Kathleen made him get a cheap Sterno stove instead and three big cans of Sterno.

Joe had a flashlight, but he looked at all the lanterns anyway. Then he chose a

saucepan, a frying pan with a folding handle, and two plastic spoons and forks.

"Get green," Kathleen said. "They'll look nicer in the woods."

Joe also bought a little drop line for fishing.

As they were leaving the store, Joe poked Kathleen. "Look! What a bargain!"

A blue plastic boat was leaning against the counter. Next to it there was a wooden paddle and a mast with a sail wrapped around it. A sign said:

SPECIAL $8.00

"What's so great about it?" asked Kathleen. "Arthur Garvey had one last year."

"His didn't have a sail."

"Eight dollars is an awful lot of money, Joe." Kathleen tugged at his arm. "We still have to buy food."

They left the store and walked down the street to the A&P. Joe waited outside while Kathleen bought groceries.

She came out with a gallon of milk and a can of baked beans.

"Why so much milk?" asked Joe.

"This size has a handle." Kathleen swung the plastic jug back and forth.

They took a short cut through the streets of the town and came out on the highway. The road wound up into the mountains. On their left it overlooked a rocky river. They passed a few inns and tourist homes. A sign advertised boats and motors.

Purple drifts of sweet-smelling bee balm grew along the road, and Joe and Kathleen walked along to the steady hum of the bees working in the flowers. At last they had to sit down to rest. Joe opened the jug of milk.

"Joe," said Kathleen, "we didn't buy cups!"

"What's wrong with this?" Joe handed her the saucepan. "I'll drink out of the frying pan."

Kathleen peeled off the labels. It wasn't easy to drink from the pans, but it was fun.

Just before they came to the lake there was a fork in the road. They took the road to the right. Up ahead a concrete plant was shooting black smoke into the blue sky. Trucks filled with sand and gravel clanked over the road.

Around a bend they came to a sign:

GARVEY'S COTTAGES
NEXT LEFT

Before they reached the dirt road that led to the cottages, Joe and Kathleen left the highway and went into the woods.

They followed a deer trail to a small marshy creek and waded in the cool water until they came to a spring. There were green ferns around it, greener than anything else in the wood.

"Isn't our pine needle cabin somewhere near here?" asked Kathleen.

"Just over that hill – in the pine grove," Joe said. "Come on. Let's go look at it."

Kathleen set the milk jug in the spring. Then she and Joe walked along a path to the top of the hill and into the pine grove.

The cabin was not there.

Chapter Three

KATHLEEN looked all around the grove. "Maybe this isn't the right place," she said.

"This is the place, all right," Joe said. "But I don't remember all this underbrush." He kicked a clump of white birch fungus. "Ow! There are logs under here." Joe bent over the mass of leaves and tangled vines. It covered a pile of rotting logs and branches. "Kath," he said, "I think I've found our pine needle cabin."

Kathleen ran over to see. "What happened? I thought we made it so strong." She was almost crying.

Joe looked at the ruins of the cabin. He was sure the two Garvey boys had wrecked it. They lived at the lake all year round and were always hunting in the woods.

Joe knew one thing for sure. He wasn't going to let those dumb Garvey kids spoil his plans. "Don't worry, Kath," he said, "we'll build it over again."

"It's late," Kathleen said, "and I'm hungry."

"You're always hungry. Anyway, it's not going to rain tonight. We'll sleep out in the sleeping bags. It'll be fun. Now let's get supper."

Kathleen gathered stones to make a ring around the can of Sterno. Then they both remembered: no matches. "Never mind," Kathleen said, "the beans are still warm from being in the sun." Kathleen started to reach for the can of beans. "Oh, Joe, we forgot to buy a can opener!"

Joe grinned. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the fat Swiss Army knife his father had given him for his birthday. Along with a saw, a screwdriver, a corkscrew, and several other useful tools, the knife had a can opener on it.

They ate the beans right out of the can. They drank some milk out of the frying pan and the saucepan. And to finish the meal they each had a slice of bread and peanut butter.

"I don't think I've ever tasted anything so good," said Kathleen.

"Me either," Joe said. "It's much better than stewed tomatoes. Now, what about bed? I'm tired."

"Do you really think it's safe right out here with no house or anything?" said Kathleen. "You remember Bill and Arthur Garvey said there were bears in the woods."

"I wouldn't take *their* word for any-

thing," Joe said. "Did you ever see a bear? I don't believe there are any."

Under a big pine tree there was a wide circle clear of any underbrush. The pine needles lay on the ground, thick and soft. Joe unrolled his sleeping bag on the ground, kicked off his shoes, and wriggled into the bag. The sun was going down, and a breeze moved the branches of the pine tree.

Kathleen spread out her sleeping bag. She opened a garbage bag and pulled out a stuffed toy mouse with long skinny legs.

Joe sat straight up. "Don't tell me you brought that stupid mouse! Aren't you too old for that? Besides, he's cross-eyed."

"I can't sleep without him, and he's not either cross-eyed." Kathleen took a good look at the mouse. "Well, maybe he is, but anyway I'd worry about him if I left him at home."

"But, Kath, he's such a mess," Joe said.

"He's all patches. Didn't Daddy say he'd get you a new one if you'd throw out that wreck?"

"It just wouldn't be Mouse." Kathleen twisted down into her sleeping bag. It was no use trying to explain to Joe. She'd had Mouse as long as she could remember.

Before Kathleen was even comfortable in her sleeping bag, Joe was sound asleep. Kathleen lay on her back, with one arm around Mouse. She looked up at the sky showing pink through the dark branches.

It seemed strange not to be sleeping in the room with her little sister. Kathleen wondered if Beth missed her. For a long time she lay awake listening to all the different sounds of the wood.

Chapter Four

CRACK! Something woke Kathleen. What was it? She opened her eyes. She had never known night could be so black. The back of her neck felt prickly as if her hair were standing on end.

Crack! There it was again. Kathleen grabbed Mouse. She was afraid to make a sound, but she had to wake Joe.

Slowly she stretched out her arm. It was too dark to see Joe, but she could hear him breathing. Kathleen touched his ear. "Wake up!" she whispered.

"What's the matter?"

"I think there's something near our fireplace."

Crack! Now Joe heard it too. Could it be a bear, Joe thought. Maybe the Garvey boys were right. Should he try to scare the bear, or would that only make it attack them? Joe grabbed the flashlight and clicked it on.

Two yellow lights shone back at him. For a minute Joe didn't know what they were. Then he saw they were the eyes of an animal. He could make out the shape — too small for a bear. The animal held the bean can in its paws and stared at the flashlight.

"It's a raccoon!" whispered Joe with relief.

The raccoon dropped the can and climbed part way up the pine tree. It clung there, staring at the light. The bushes crackled. Three fuzzy baby raccoons stumbled over to the pine tree and climbed up after their mother. All four raccoons clung to the tree and stared at the

light. Joe clicked it off for a few moments. When he turned it on again, the raccoons were gone.

"It looks as if we're alone again," said Kathleen.

Joe slapped his neck, "Not quite. I'm being visited by mosquitoes."

The excitement was over. Kathleen fell asleep again and slept till morning.

Joe was still asleep when Kathleen woke up. She went to the spring to brush her teeth. A doe and her fawn were standing on the bank. The mother deer flicked her long ears and looked at Kathleen with large brown eyes. Then, with the fawn close behind her, she turned and bounded away.

Kathleen stooped to wash her face. How different this was from hot old Brooklyn. It was like living in a fairy tale.

Kathleen started back to the campsite through a tangle of young pine trees, and

followed a faint path around a hill. Where was the big pine they'd slept under? Had she made a wrong turn? Suddenly she was lost.

Kathleen didn't know what to do. She looked around her.

There was a tree on the hillside with boards nailed to it to make steps. Halfway up the tree was a wooden platform built by hunters. They used it for a lookout. Kathleen could use it too.

She began to climb. The boards were far apart. By the time she got to the top she was out of breath. She pulled herself up onto the platform.

Kathleen lay on her stomach and looked over the edge. The ground seemed so far below. It made her dizzy. She shut her eyes.

When she opened them she looked down again. She had a good view of the

wood all around her. Over to the right she could see Joe yawning and stretching under the big pine. Kathleen thought how clever she was to find him this way.

"Joe!" she yelled. Her voice sounded terribly loud in the stillness of the wood. A bluejay screamed in answer.

Joe jumped to his feet. "Kath, where are you?" he called.

"On the platform in the tree."

Joe remembered the last time Kathleen had climbed a tree. He put on his shoes and made his way through the woods to his sister. "Come down," he said, "and don't make so much noise."

"I can't," said Kathleen.

"Then how did you get up?"

"I just did."

Joe climbed to the top step. Kathleen backed off the platform. Step by step Joe helped her down.

Once they were on the ground Joe said, "Well, if you've done your climbing for the day, let's go take a look at the lake."

"Oh, yes, let's. I want to go swimming."

They walked through the woods and half slid down a cliff to a large sandpit. A steam shovel and a dump truck rumbled down the dirt road.

"Duck, Kath! We don't want anybody to see us in the woods." Joe pulled Kathleen into the shadow of some birch trees. "They're digging deeper into the woods this year," Joe said. It made him sick to see the trees knocked down like that.

They took a detour around the sandpit and came to the lake. NO TRESPASSING signs were nailed to the trees. A cold white mist covered the water. They were close to a big concrete dam, and there were no cottages on this part of the shore. The first ones were Garvey's, just around the bend.

A line of markers stretched across the lake. A warning was painted in large letters on the dam.

DANGER! NO BOATS OR SWIMMING HERE
STAY ON LAKE SIDE OF MARKERS

Joe and Kathleen were on the wrong side of the markers.

Joe sat down on the gravelly beach. Everything was going wrong. The woods were being torn up, and now they couldn't even go swimming!

"Why don't we swim on the other side of the markers?" asked Kathleen.

"The Garvey kids would see us. Daddy told Mr. Garvey we weren't coming up this year."

Joe looked out at the lake. He couldn't see far because of the white mist that floated over the water. The big lake had been formed when the Power and Light

Company built the dam. The low ground had been flooded. A few hills stuck up out of the water and became islands.

Suddenly Joe jumped to his feet. "Kath!" he almost shouted. "I have a great idea! If we had that boat from Binnard's we could camp on Epply Island!"

"We'd have to go all the way back to Hawley for it. And how would we carry it with everything else?"

"We'll hide our stuff in the woods and come back for it. Anyway, we have to go to town to buy cups and plates and the stuff that keeps bugs off."

Kathleen scratched her arm. "All right, but first let's go to the blackberry patch. I'm hungry."

Chapter Five

THE ROAD back to Hawley was all downhill. Except for a truck or two, there was almost no traffic so early in the morning.

"Joe," said Kathleen, "suppose someone finds Mouse?" She had hidden him in her rolled-up sleeping bag.

"Oh, Kath, don't be an idiot. Who would want him?"

The hardware store was not open yet. Joe looked through the locked door, but he couldn't see the plastic boat.

"Maybe it's been sold," said Kathleen.

Joe was afraid she was right, but he wouldn't give up yet. "Maybe Mrs. Binnard put it somewhere in the back. We'll come back when the store is open," he said.

They turned off Main Avenue. They crossed the railroad track and found themselves on a winding street. On their right a big old frame house was set among tall maple trees. The house had a porch around

two sides and a tower on one corner. Kathleen stopped to watch a pair of yellow and black goldfinches fluttering in a birdbath on the untidy lawn.

A voice said, "Boy!"

Joe's first thought was to grab Kathleen's hand and run. He looked around.

The street was empty except for a woman in a rocking chair on the porch. She was wearing a brown dress and sitting so still that they had not noticed her. "Boy," she said again, "please come here."

Joe went up the cracked old walk to the porch. Now he saw that the woman was very old. She was small and thin. Her hands were knobby, and she wore bedroom slippers on her feet. A walking stick leaned against the chair and a blue-eyed Siamese cat was sitting in her lap.

The old woman looked over her glasses. "Would you like to earn some money?"

"Yes," said Joe at once. They would need money, especially if they bought the boat. "What do I have to do?"

"My grass needs cutting badly. Perhaps

the little girl would like to earn something too?"

"I'll ask her." Joe raced back to where Kathleen was tying her shoelaces. "Kath, the lady's going to pay me to cut her grass, and she wants you to do some work too!"

What could Kathleen do that anyone would want to pay for? She felt awkward and shy, and she wished she had combed her hair. Slowly she walked up to the porch.

"Hello," said the old woman. The cat jumped from her lap and ran to rub against Kathleen's legs. "This is Lady Jane, and I'm Miss Williams. Who are you?"

Kathleen stooped to pet the cat. No pets were allowed in the apartment building where she lived in Brooklyn. Lady Jane purred loudly. Kathleen picked her up. "My name is Kathleen," she said. "My brother is Joe."

"Lady Jane certainly has taken a fancy to you. She doesn't like everybody," Miss Williams said.

"I always wanted a cat." Kathleen slid her finger along Lady Jane's back.

Miss Williams stood up. The old woman moved to her front door carefully, a step at a time. Joe held it open for her. Kathleen followed, still holding the cat.

The house was different from any they had ever seen. The floors had fancy borders. Tall fluted pillars of wood divided the hall from the living room. Joe noticed all sorts of interesting little nooks and caught sight of two different stairways leading to the upper floors. As they walked through the dining room Kathleen saw pots of begonias and African violets blooming in the sunny bay window. The wonderful smell of fresh baked bread was everywhere. Two brown loaves were cooling on the kitchen table.

Kathleen had never seen such a big kitchen. The floor was made of wide wooden planks, and the stove had long legs. A few dirty dishes were in the sink.

"You can heat the water for the dishes on the stove," Miss Williams said. "There are matches on the shelf."

Kathleen felt as if the house were enchanted. She filled the kettle with water and took the chipped enamel dishpan from the nail under the sink.

Miss Williams was talking to Joe. "You'll find the lawn mower in the tool shed at the back of the garden."

Joe went out by the kitchen door. Miss Williams sat at the table and slowly peeled onions and scraped carrots. Kathleen sat on a high stool to wash the dishes.

The cat leaped to the shelf beside the sink and kept a close watch on the bubbles in the dishpan. At last she stepped onto the drainboard and poked a dark paw into the

dishwater. She drew back at once, shook her paw rapidly, and jumped down.

Kathleen laughed. "Lady Jane, are you trying to help with the dishes?"

"Of course she is," said Miss Williams. "She is very old, and she understands more than you would think. Lady Jane thinks you haven't had much practice washing dishes."

It was true. There was a dishwasher in the apartment in Brooklyn, and it was only when they stayed at the cottage that Kathleen helped her mother with the dishes.

"I can do my own washing and sweeping," explained Miss Williams, "but my arthritis makes me slow. It's nice to have help."

Kathleen looked at Miss Williams' crippled hands. She could hardly believe that the old woman could hold a broom. "I'm not good at sweeping," Kathleen said. "I like mopping better."

"Have you ever used a feather duster? That's fun." Miss Williams took out a bunch of turkey feathers tied to a wooden handle.

Wherever Kathleen went with the duster Lady Jane followed. Now and then she dived at the duster. Once she captured a feather and scampered off with it.

Mopping under the long-legged beds and dressers was easy. Kathleen enjoyed exploring all the rooms. The ones upstairs had a musty smell as if they hadn't been used for a very long time. She loved the funny round room at the top of the tower.

Joe was having trouble in the yard. The heavy old lawn mower would hardly turn. Joe found a can of oil in the tool shed and oiled the wheels and the cutting blades. After that he raced along, sending up a shower of sweet-smelling grass, and cutting a neat path.

When he had gone over the entire lawn,

Joe raked up the cuttings and piled them in a bushel basket. He rolled the lawn mower back to the shed and went in through the kitchen door.

Kathleen was taking a blue tablecloth out of a drawer in the dining room. She looked quite at home in the house. "Wash your hands, Joe," she said. "Miss Williams has asked us to have lunch with her. I told her Mother wouldn't mind."

The big round dining-room table had carved wooden feet. Kathleen spread the tablecloth on it and set three places. There was a patch of black-eyed susans growing beside the back porch. Kathleen picked a bunch of them to put in a bowl on the table.

Miss Williams looked very happy. Joe held her chair as she sat down.

Both children were hungry. The chicken sandwiches and vegetable soup tasted even better than the baked beans

had the night before. After three chicken sandwiches Kathleen felt even more at home. She wasn't shy any longer. "Who sleeps in the tower room?" she asked Miss Williams.

"Nobody now," Miss Williams said. "I did when I was a little girl. I used to pretend I was a princess in a castle."

"Why don't you sleep there any more?" asked Joe.

"The stairs are hard for me to climb nowadays, Joe. I use a little room on this floor. The tower would be nice for guests, but I don't often have guests."

Joe finished the last drop of soup in his bowl. Then Miss Williams sent Kathleen to get half a blueberry pie from the old wooden icebox on the back porch. She cut it into two large pieces and one small one. "I can't eat so much," she said, giving Joe and Kathleen the bigger pieces.

After lunch Kathleen cleared the table

and gave Lady Jane a plate of chicken scraps. She washed the dishes, and Joe dried them.

Miss Williams thanked them and gave them each a dollar. "Please come and see me again. I can always use help." She went back to the rocking chair on the porch. Kathleen and Joe walked down the street toward Main Avenue.

Chapter Six

BINNARD'S hardware store was open. The boat was outside, leaning against the store window. The price was now $6.75.

"It really is our lucky day!" Joe ran into the store and found Mrs. Binnard at the back, showing flashbulbs to a customer.

"Oh, hello, Joe, did you forget something yesterday?"

"Yes, I did. Several things," said Joe. When Mrs. Binnard finished her sale, Joe bought two plastic cups and plates. "I'd like to look at that blue boat you have outside." Joe wondered how his voice could sound so calm when he felt so excited. Carefully he inspected the boat. There was nothing wrong with it.

"Joe," Mrs. Binnard said, "I'm not sure this boat is really safe, and I don't think it will hold both of you."

"I'll take it," Joe said. "I know how to handle this kind of boat." He paid her.

Mrs. Binnard looked worried. "Do be careful, Joe," she said.

Joe picked up the boat and went to find Kathleen. She was coming out of the A&P with margarine, matches, two cans of beans, a loaf of bread, and a can of spray to keep the bugs off.

Joe put everything in the boat. Kathleen took hold of the front, and Joe held up the back. They walked slowly up the highway toward the big lake.

"Wouldn't it be fun if we could just paddle back to camp?" Joe said.

Kathleen shifted the boat to her other shoulder. "I'm too tired, Joe."

"Well then," Joe said, "we'll have to get up really early tomorrow."

When they reached their campsite there were signs that someone else had been there during the day. The stones Kathleen had gathered for a fireplace were scattered. A torn cardboard box lay under the big pine tree. The words HAVAHART ANIMAL TRAP were printed on the box.

Kathleen dug in the underbrush where the sleeping bags and other gear were hidden. What if someone had found Mouse?

Kathleen dragged the sleeping bags out. No one had touched them. She pulled Mouse out and hugged him.

The milk was still in the spring, covered by a leafy branch that Joe had broken from a tree. A striped chipmunk was squeaking overhead. "Look!" Kathleen said. A cage-like trap had been placed on the flat rock near the spring, and a baby chipmunk was caught in it.

Kathleen went over to the cage. "Oh, the poor thing! Joe, help me let him out."

Joe opened the door of the trap, but the chipmunk was too frightened to come out. Kathleen reached in and took out the tiny animal. She put it on the ground.

"Chip!" called the chipmunk on the branch above. The little chipmunk flicked its tail and scampered up into the tree.

"The Garvey kids have been here," Joe said. "We're lucky they didn't find our milk when they set that trap, but I'm not

going to let anything those dopes do bother me. I'm going to catch a fish. Maybe I'll be lucky." Joe baited the hook with a piece of bread.

Kathleen sat on the mossy ground and admired the new boat. "It ought to have a name."

"You mean *she* ought to have a name. Boats are always 'she.' How about *Lucky Day*?" suggested Joe.

"I like *Good Luck* better," Kathleen said.

"O.K. Do you have anything to write with?"

Kathleen pulled her Magic Marker out of her pocket. She printed GOOD LUCK across the stern of the boat, making the letters as black as she could. When she finished, the Magic Marker was dry. Kathleen buried it under the moss.

"I'm going fishing." Joe set out through the woods. Kathleen hurried after him.

They made a wide circle to avoid the sand-pit where the steam shovel was working.

Here, near the dam, the water was very deep. The roots of a fallen tree stood up like a bush on the beach. Joe pulled himself up onto the great trunk which jutted into the lake. He slid along on the seat of his pants until he was over the water. Kathleen stayed on a part of the tree trunk that was much closer to shore.

Joe looked down into the water. It was so clear that he could see the fish swimming about. He lowered the baited hook.

The little red and white bobber bounced up and down. Suddenly it went under. Joe grabbed the line and pulled out a gray slimy creature with two long whiskers.

"Ugh, a catfish!" he said. He took the hook out and threw the fish back into the lake. Kathleen decided she didn't really like fishing.

"Sh-sh." Joe baited the hook with bread from his pocket and tossed it in. Before long he had caught two small sunfish. He threw them back. And now a long dark shape rose from the bottom of the lake

and came toward the hook. Joe held his breath. The big fish opened its mouth and grabbed the bait.

Joe jerked sharply on the line. The big fish splashed furiously with its tail and flopped out of the water. Joe held the line in one hand and grabbed the slippery fish with the other. The fish struggled. Joe dropped the line and held the fish with both hands.

"Get the line, Kath!" Joe slid back along the tree trunk to the shore.

Kathleen nearly fell into the water, but she managed to get the fishing line. She turned to look at her brother.

Joe's eyes were shining. "It's a bluegill," he said proudly, "and big enough to feed both of us!"

Chapter Seven

THE BIRDS were chirping loudly in the pine tree. Joe opened his eyes and sat up. "Wake up, Kath."

"It's cold." Kathleen snuggled deeper into her sleeping bag. "Can't we wait until the sun is really up?"

"Come on, Kath," Joe said. "Put on your sweater. We've got to get away from here before Arthur and Bill Garvey come to check on their trap."

"I can't paddle without breakfast," said Kathleen.

Joe knew better than to argue with Kathleen when she was hungry. He got out the bread and peanut butter and poured two cups of milk.

After breakfast Kathleen carefully packed Mouse in with her clothes. Joe rolled up the sleeping bag and put everything into the *Good Luck*.

As they carried the boat through the woods, Kathleen tripped over tree roots and crashed into the low branches. "Don't go so fast, Joe," she said.

The trucks had not yet arrived in the big sandpit. "If we hurry," said Joe, "we can leave before anybody sees us."

When they got to the beach they took off their shoes and put them in the boat. Joe set the red mast with the white sail upright in its stand. They rolled their jeans above their knees and waded into the water with the *Good Luck*.

As soon as the boat was floating, Joe held it steady for Kathleen to get in. Then he climbed in too. The *Good Luck* leaned far over to one side. "Move over, Kath!" Joe said. Kathleen shut her eyes and held

onto the side of the boat. Suppose they drowned? She grabbed the sack that held Mouse.

Joe threw his weight to the other side, and the boat straightened. Mrs. Binnard was right. The boat was not safe, and there was hardly room for both of them in it. The boat was low in the water and very wobbly. Joe took charge of the sail in the front while Kathleen sat in the back and paddled.

The *Good Luck* moved into the middle of the lake. Soon they could no longer see the shore through the mist. An old man in a rowboat was fishing near the markers. "Hey!" he yelled, "nobody's allowed there!"

Kathleen paddled faster. What if he should come after them? She could feel her heart banging against her ribs.

They were passing Garvey's cottages. The people in them must still be asleep.

They passed the dock that had been theirs last summer. It was queer to be floating past like strangers.

Joe swung the crossbar of the sail to catch the breeze. The sail puffed out, and the *Good Luck* skimmed along.

As the sun rose higher, the mist broke up into little wisps and began to rise off the lake. Joe steered to the left. Epply Island was ahead of them. It was ringed with craggy rocks and crowned with trees. Joe felt like standing up and shouting with joy, but he was afraid to rock the boat. "Look, Kath," he said. "There's our new home."

"It looks like a pirate island." Kathleen thought she had never seen such a beautiful sight.

The boat sailed into shallow water. Joe and Kathleen jumped out and dragged it up on the beach. They changed into their bathing suits behind an enormous rock.

Soon they were swimming in the cool water. Kathleen bobbed lazily along on her back while Joe swam underwater. He

found a fishing lure, tangled by its line in a rock. "Hey, Kath, this ought to save a lot of bread."

After their swim they hung their bathing suits on a bush and got dressed.

"Why don't we camp in one of those little caves near the shore?" said Kathleen. "It could be a pirate cave, and we could look for buried treasure."

Joe shook his head. "I want to build another cabin on the very highest part of the island, where the woods are thickest."

They looked all over the island for fallen logs and branches and carried them to a tiny clearing on top of the hill.

"If half the house is underground, we won't need so much wood," Joe said.

"We don't have a spade," said Kathleen.

"We could scrape with the paddle," Joe said.

As they dug they piled the dirt and rocks around the rim. By lunchtime they

had made a hollow almost a foot deep. They ate some bread and peanut butter and kept on working.

When they had hollowed out another foot and a half they lined the hole with several inches of pine needles. Now it was time to build the walls of logs and branches. "I'm tired," said Kathleen. "Let's go for a swim."

Joe felt grubby and prickly. A swim would feel good. They went to get their bathing suits.

When they came to the foot of the steep wooded slope they heard voices. They hid behind one of the huge rocks and peeked around it.

Two boys and a girl were roasting frankfurters over a driftwood fire. The girl seemed to be about Joe's age, and the boys were a couple of years older. A red outboard motorboat was pulled up on the beach.

Joe and Kathleen would have to come out in the open to get their bathing suits. Joe hated to let anyone see them on the island, but he was hot, and he wanted that swim. "Come on, Kath." He stepped out from behind the rock.

The girl at the fire looked up. She smiled in such a friendly way that Joe and Kathleen liked her at once. She had braces on her teeth.

"Is that your boat?" She pointed to the *Good Luck*. "We wondered who it belonged to."

Joe nodded.

"How in the world did you get here in that?" one of the boys asked.

"It wasn't easy," said Joe.

"What's all the stuff in it?"

"Sleeping bags. We're camping out tonight."

"You're lucky. Our folks won't let us.

Oh, I guess I ought to tell you, I'm Hank. Jo-Ann is my sister. And this is Charley, my best friend. We're at Garvey's cottages for a week."

"That's where we usually stay," said Kathleen.

Joe stepped on her foot to remind her to be quiet. "See you in a minute," he said. He picked his suit off the bush and ducked behind a rock.

Jo-Ann handed Kathleen her swim suit. "You look as if you've been rolling in the dirt."

"We've been digging."

"Sounds like fun. What's your name?"

"Kathleen. My brother's name is Joe."

Jo-Ann bit into her hot dog. "Get into your suit. I'll go swimming with you."

It was as if Kathleen had always known Jo-Ann. In a few minutes they were splashing in the lake, racing each other to the

end of the point of rocks. They climbed up and sat dangling their feet in the water.

Joe wanted to take a good look at the motorboat. "That's a great motor," he said.

"It's a Merc Two Hundred," said Hank. "It was secondhand. Charley and I helped Dad rebuild it." He took the cover off the motor to show Joe what they had done.

By the time Kathleen and Jo-Ann came dripping out of the lake, Joe had learned a lot about outboard motors.

"The fire's still burning," Jo-Ann said. She took out a box of marshmallows and a thermos jug of lemonade. "Get a stick, everybody."

Kathleen loved toasting marshmallows. She put hers right in the fire so they would be burned black outside. Inside they were nice and gooey.

Charley licked his sticky fingers. "Do you have a tent?" he asked Joe.

"We were building a sort of cabin."

Joe and Kathleen led their new friends up the hill to the clearing. Jo-Ann and the boys wanted to help build the cabin.

Kathleen wanted windows and a front porch, but Joe insisted on keeping it simple. When it was finished it was not much to look at, but it was strong enough to keep out the wind and the rain. There was just room to unroll the sleeping bags on the soft pine needles. The cabin wasn't high enough to stand in. But, Joe pointed out, they didn't sleep standing.

"Maybe we'll come by tomorrow," said Hank. "I want to hear what it's like to spend the night in something like this."

After the motorboat had roared away across the lake, Kathleen and Joe went to unload the *Good Luck*. The milk was sour from sitting in the sun, and the margarine was soft and runny. "What will we do?"

said Kathleen. "There's no spring on the island."

Joe had an idea. "Remember those rock holes you wanted to play pirate in? We could keep the food there. I saw one with a ledge inside that we could use for a shelf."

They stored the sacks of clothing in the pine needle cabin and opened a can of beans for supper. It had been a long and exciting day. Now Kathleen felt safe in the little house. It was dark inside and smelled of pine needles. Kathleen slid into her sleeping bag and closed her eyes. She felt for the plastic sack and pulled out Mouse. She tucked him under her head like a pillow and fell asleep.

Chapter Eight

EARLY next morning Joe used the fishing lure he had found to catch a speckled trout. Kathleen was still asleep. Joe woke her and told her to get the frying pan ready while he cleaned the fish.

Kathleen thought Mouse smelled like the dirty laundry he'd been packed in yesterday. She tied him to a tree branch by his long legs and left him to air.

The day was hot. Joe and Kathleen went for a swim after breakfast.

While they were swimming, Joe heard the roar of an outboard motor. A red motorboat was racing toward the island.

Jo-Ann waved from the front seat. "Come for a ride."

Joe and Kathleen swam out to the boat.

Charley gave Kathleen a hand over the side. Hank was steering. "Did you get any sleep?" he asked.

"Weren't you scared?" Jo-Ann wanted to know.

"There was nothing to be scared of," Joe said. "Say, are you going past Walt's Landing? We could get milk at the general store there." Joe had the money in a button-up pocket in his swimming trunks.

"You're going to spend *another* night in that cabin!" said Jo-Ann.

"We're going to spend the whole summer there." Joe squeezed into the seat beside Hank.

"And your folks will *let* you?" Jo-Ann moved over to make room.

"They don't care what we do," Joe said.

Charley spoke from the back seat. "Hank, we're almost out of gas. We could get some at the pump at Walt's Landing while they buy their milk."

Hank steered around motorboats and water skiers. The red motorboat turned into the harbor at Walt's Landing and made its way around the many boats in the cove.

A gasoline pump stood at the end of a big wooden dock. While Charley and Hank were getting gas, Joe helped Kathleen onto the dock. "We'll be back as soon

as we get the groceries," Joe called. He and Kathleen walked along the blacktop road to the main highway.

"How much money is left, Joe?"

"A lot."

"How much exactly?"

Joe unbuttoned his pocket, pulled out the money, and counted it. "Nine dollars and twelve cents."

"I just wanted to know." Kathleen picked a stalk of grass and chewed the end of it.

The little general store was on the highway. Kathleen peeked into the laundromat next door. "We ought to come in here. I don't have any clean socks."

"What do you need socks for?" Joe said.

They left the store with a half gallon of milk and a box of graham crackers and went back to the dock.

"Joe!" Kathleen almost dropped the milk. "Where's the motorboat?"

"The motorboat?" Joe looked around the crowded harbor. He couldn't see the boat. "Don't worry, Kath," he said. "Hank is probably just taking a run around the cove. They didn't think we'd be back so soon."

Joe and Kathleen waited on the dock for what seemed a very long time. The sunlight glittering on the water made Kathleen's head ache. She didn't want to think that Jo-Ann and the boys would just go away and leave them, but what else could she think? A hot tear trickled down Kathleen's nose.

Joe glared at her. "Don't be a baby! If this is their idea of a joke, I don't think it's funny. Anyway, we can't stay here any longer. Someone might see us and start asking all kinds of questions." He grabbed Kathleen's hand and dragged her off the dock and down the road.

Chapter Nine

JOE knew they had to get back to the island. All their things were there. But how could they get back without a boat?

"Come on, Kath." Joe and Kathleen turned off the road to a side street that led into a path through the woods.

The moss and pine needles were soft underfoot, but the stones hurt. When they came to the scratchy blackberry vines they went carefully, one step at a time. They ate the berries as they walked and took turns drinking out of the milk container.

The path through the wood led to their old campsite near the spring. When they reached it they'd eaten half the graham crackers.

"It's like coming home." Kathleen stretched out under the pine tree.

"I've been thinking," said Joe. "We'd better wait till tomorrow morning to get back to the island."

"What difference will tomorrow make?"

"We could borrow Mr. Garvey's canoe before he gets up."

"That seems like stealing, Joe."

"Not if we bring the canoe back."

At this moment Joe heard the noise of snapping twigs. He made a sign to Kathleen to be quiet. Now they heard voices, coming closer. Without a sound Joe and Kathleen rolled over onto their stomachs and crawled into a rocky hollow. The bushes around the rim hid them. Kathleen held her breath.

Joe recognized the voices now. It was Arthur and Bill Garvey.

"Hey, Art!" It was Bill's voice. "Maybe this is a better place to set our trap. Do

you think anybody was fooling with it down by the spring? The peanuts I put in it are gone, but there's nothing caught in it."

"Oh, you just don't know how to set it," Arthur said. "Let me do it."

There was a clicking as Arthur set the trap. "I know raccoons like to eat carrots."

"Say," Bill said. "Isn't this about where we found the stupid cabin those Dennis kids built?"

"Yep. I sure wish I could see their faces when they find it smashed. But they're not coming up this year."

It was all Joe could do to keep quiet. Those Garvey boys. Just because their father owned a cottage colony they thought the woods belonged to them.

"Come on, Bill." Arthur was talking again. "We'd better get home for lunch."

Joe and Kathleen waited until the Garvey boys were gone. Then Kathleen stood

up and brushed the dirt from her knees. "So that's who broke up our cabin."

"Of course," said Joe. "I knew it all along. I'd beat Arthur up, but I don't want him to know we're here. He'd tell his father, and next thing the police would find us."

Joe held the door of the trap open while Kathleen took out the carrot. It was a big one. Kathleen broke it and gave half to Joe. "No use wasting it on raccoons when we're still hungry," she said.

It was hot in the woods. Gnats buzzed around their faces.

"Let's go to the shore, Joe. It might be cooler there." Kathleen rubbed the dirt off her piece of carrot and took a bite.

"We'll have to watch out for Bill and Arthur," Joe said.

They went to the top of the cliff and started down. Kathleen held onto the bushes with one hand to keep from sliding.

She still held the milk container in her other hand. The stones scraped her bare feet.

The air was warm. The mosquitoes came when it began to get dark.

Kathleen slapped her arm. "We can't stay here."

"Follow me," Joe said. He walked carefully along the rocky shore. It was darker every minute. Fallen logs blocked their way, and the woods came down in steep banks right to the water.

When they came around the bend they saw the lights of the Garvey cottages among the trees. They could hear Bill and Arthur shouting as they played on the dirt road with the children from the cottages.

Down by the beach the docks were white against the dark water. The boats moored there belonged to the people in the cottages. Joe led Kathleen to a large

boat neatly covered with a tarpaulin for the night.

"This is just what I've been looking for," Joe said. "There's our bedroom."

Quietly the children crawled under the tarpaulin. They lay on the soft padded seats. A terry beach robe had been left on the rear seat. Joe tucked it around Kathleen.

It was hard for Kathleen to sleep without Mouse. She was worried about him all alone on the island, hanging upside down, tied to the tree branch. The boat rocked gently as the water slapped against it. At last Kathleen's eyes closed, and she fell asleep.

Chapter Ten

JOE lay awake. He heard heavy footsteps walk out onto the dock. A man was standing there. Joe guessed he was fishing. Suppose he decided to get something out of the boat? He might want the beach robe. Joe's legs ached from staying so still, but he didn't dare move.

At last the man stamped away off the dock.

Joe stretched out on the front seat of the boat. He was so tired he couldn't keep his eyes open, but he kept waking and wondering if it were morning. Finally he poked his head out from under the tarpaulin. The sky was getting light.

Joe shook Kathleen. She grunted and opened her eyes. Then she sat up and looked around. "Hurry!" whispered Joe. "We have to get the canoe."

They slipped out of the boat and ran down the beach to the canoe. It was upside down on two sawhorses. The paddles were inside.

It was an aluminum canoe and easier to launch than the *Good Luck*. Once they

were in it they picked up the paddles and set to work. They glided from the shore.

By the time the morning fog had lifted, Garvey's place was far behind them. The sun felt hot on Kathleen's bare shoulders. "Joe, how are we going to get the canoe back to Mr. Garvey?"

"We could hide it somewhere," Joe said, "and write him a letter telling him where it is."

"How about writing with charcoal on birchbark?" Kathleen asked.

Joe laughed. "What would we use for an envelope?"

While Kathleen thought about this, she heard a loud "Hello-o-o!" The red motorboat was speeding toward them.

Jo-Ann was the first to speak. "So! You're the ones who swiped Mr. Garvey's canoe. He's been asking everyone if they saw who took it."

"We only borrowed it to get back to the island," Joe said. "If you hadn't left us in the lurch – "

"Wait a minute," Hank broke in. "Didn't you get our message? We left it with the kid who's in charge of the gas pump at Walt's Landing."

"No," Joe said.

"Gee, I'm sorry." Hank stopped the motorboat close to the canoe. "He said he knew somebody who'd give you a lift in his boat. My dad came by when you were at the store yesterday. He wanted the boat. If I argued with him, I'd never be allowed to use it."

"I know," Joe said. "I can't argue with my father either."

"But why'd you take Mr. Garvey's canoe without asking?" Charley wanted to know. "He'd have lent it to you. You're a funny kid."

Joe looked straight at Charley. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Of course I can," Charley said.

"Can you?" Joe asked Hank and Jo-Ann. They nodded. "Promise!" said Joe.

They both promised. "Cross my heart," said Jo-Ann.

Joe took a deep breath. "We ran away from home."

Nobody said anything for a minute. Then, "I ran away once," said Jo-Ann, "and it was Hank who got the beating."

Hank looked disgusted. "I caught her playing hooky, and I told her she'd get a licking, so she ran away. Then my folks said it was my fault for scaring her."

"I hid in the garage all night one time," said Charley. "I'd taken the TV set apart and couldn't get it back together. My folks were so glad to find me they didn't even yell at me. Dad gave me a book about TV repair."

"We didn't run away from our *folks*," Kathleen explained. "There was a horrible woman who was supposed to be taking care of us." And then Kathleen told the whole story.

"You sure have an awful lot of nerve," Hank said.

"And we left you stranded!" said Jo-Ann. "How can we make up for it?"

"Tow the canoe back to Mr. Garvey," Joe said at once.

"I'll say I found it floating on the lake," Hank said. "I just won't mention that anybody was in it. Jo-Ann can stop off for milk at Walt's Landing while I take the canoe back. Here, grab!" He tossed the end of a ski rope to Kathleen.

She sat in the front of the canoe and held the rope while the motorboat towed the canoe to the island. When they were close to the shore, Joe and Kathleen jumped into the water. Joe tied the rope to

a ring in the prow of the canoe. The motorboat swung around and zoomed off toward Walt's Landing.

Kathleen washed off the dirt from yesterday's slide down the cliff. Then she went to look at Mouse. He was still hanging from the tree. Now he didn't smell of laundry, but he was sticky with pine tar. Kathleen put him in the cabin.

While Joe took the fishing lure and went to see what he could catch, Kathleen got out a can of Sterno and the frying pan.

She had taken the clothes out of the plastic bags and spread them on a bush to air when Joe came back to the clearing. "No luck, Kath. The fish aren't biting. Lucky we still have a can of beans."

Kathleen was just in the mood for fish, but she made the best of it. "I've never had baked beans for breakfast," she said, "but they're better than stewed tomatoes for dinner."

Chapter Eleven

BEFORE Kathleen had time to get out the can of beans, the red motorboat came back to the island. Jo-Ann lifted a brown paper bag out of the boat. "Here's your milk," she said. "We thought it would be fun if we ate together. We bought eggs and bacon."

Joe took some money from his pocket.

"Oh, no," said Jo-Ann. "Mom gave us money to buy lunch today. If we had hamburgers or pizza it would cost much more."

Hank and Charley had beached the motorboat. Charley looked at the frying pan and the can of Sterno Kathleen was holding. "Put those away," he said. "Let's get some firewood."

Soon a hot little driftwood fire was blazing. "Watch this." Charley put a flat stone in the fire. When it was hot he raked it out and placed two strips of bacon on it. They sizzled away. When Charley took them off the stone, he put a ring of bread crust in their place. He broke an egg into the ring. It fried as neatly as if in a pan. Charley put the bacon and the egg between two slices of bread and took a big bite. "No pan to wash," he said.

Everybody looked for flat stones to copy Charley.

"It's like you to be too lazy to wash a pan," said Hank, but Joe noticed that he was using a stone too.

After the meal Charley and Hank gave Joe a lesson in water skiing. Most of the time he fell, but twice he stood up on the skis for a few moments. Joe felt as if he were flying.

Kathleen showed Jo-Ann the cave they used as a pantry. Jo-Ann put the jug of milk on the ledge along with several slices of bacon and five eggs.

The girls went up the hill to the cabin. While Kathleen folded the clothes and put them away she told Jo-Ann about Mrs. McCafferty. "She used to make us stay outside in the hot sun so we wouldn't mess up the apartment. We couldn't even come in to get a drink of water. We had to stay right in front of the building where she could keep her dragon eye on us from the window. She kept Tim and Beth in the house and played with them all day, but she didn't have any use for Joe and me."

"Some old people want kids to be dolls

for them to play with," Jo-Ann said. "My aunt liked me much more when I was little."

"But Miss Williams just acted almost as if we were grown up," Kathleen said.

"Who's Miss Williams?" asked Jo-Ann.

Kathleen told Jo-Ann all about Miss Williams and her house in Hawley. Talking about her made Kathleen want to see Miss Williams again. "Her house is so *old*, Jo-Ann. It's almost as if nothing had changed there in a hundred years."

Long after Jo-Ann and the boys had left the island Kathleen thought about Miss Williams. The more she thought, the more she wanted to go back to the house with the tower.

Next morning, after breakfast, she was scrubbing the frying pan with a bunch of leaves. "Joe, let's go to see Miss Williams."

"We're not out of money yet," Joe said.

Kathleen put away the frying pan. "Maybe she needs help with her work."

"Well, anyhow," Joe said, "it's a good excuse to go sailing in the *Good Luck*."

Kathleen insisted that they change into clean polo shirts and jeans. She left Mouse tucked in her sleeping bag.

Now that there was no heavy load, the *Good Luck* bobbed high on the water. Joe and Kathleen sailed to a marshy little inlet on the shore of the peninsula. They pulled the boat out of the water and hid it under a pile of vines and leaves. Then they walked through the tangled woods till they came to an old cart track which led them at last to the highway.

Wild yellow snapdragon grew in clumps by the roadside. Kathleen stopped to pick a bunch.

"Hurry up," said Joe. "Didn't you say you wanted to buy a comb at the five-and-ten?"

It took more than an hour to reach Hawley. They walked down Main Avenue to the five-and-ten. Kathleen bought a blue comb. She would have liked to buy a mirror too, but it cost too much.

Kathleen stopped to comb her hair. Then she tucked her shirt into her jeans and pulled her socks out of the heels of her shoes.

"You're pretty enough," said Joe. "Come on."

Joe and Kathleen didn't know the name of the street where Miss Williams lived. They walked up and down looking for the house with the tower.

"Maybe the house has vanished," Kathleen said. "Maybe we just dreamed it."

They turned a corner. The old house with the huge porch was in front of them. Miss Williams was sitting there, rocking back and forth, with Lady Jane on her lap.

Chapter Twelve

JOE and Kathleen went up the walk, and climbed the steps. Kathleen held out the bunch of yellow flowers.

Miss Williams smiled. "How lovely! That's what we call 'butter and eggs.' " She put the cat down and took the flowers. She leaned on her cane and slowly stood up. "Do come in. I'm glad to see you."

Kathleen found a bowl for the flowers in the kitchen. "We thought you might like some help, Miss Williams."

The old woman sat down. "Let me see," she said. "Do you think you could tidy my attic?"

Kathleen thought attics were the best part of a house. She often wished she lived

in a house with one. "I didn't see any attic stairs when we were here before," she said.

"You probably get to it by a trap door," said Joe.

"You've guessed it," said Miss Williams. "Take the stepladder from the back porch. Use the stairway behind the kitchen. You'll see the trap door on the ceiling of the hall on the third floor. It may be too hot for you up there. Come down if it is."

Kathleen helped Joe get the big wooden ladder up the narrow stairs.

"Mind you brace it well," called Miss Williams.

The cat kept a close watch on them. She sat on the floor under the ladder. Joe stood on the ladder while Kathleen held it steady.

Joe couldn't open the trap door. "It's painted shut. Get a screwdriver."

Kathleen ran down to the kitchen and came back with a hammer and a screw-

driver. Joe pried open the trap door. As it creaked upward, a fine shower of dust sifted down. Joe backed down the ladder.

When the air cleared he poked his head through the opening and looked around. It was a large attic with a solid floor. The rafters slanted up to meet each other. A tiny arched window, covered with cobwebs, let in a little dim light. The room was crowded with boxes and chests. Joe could see the mysterious outlines of other objects, but they were so dusty and spiderwebby that he couldn't be sure what they were.

"What's it like?" Kathleen called.

"Hot. And dusty. We'll have to get something to clean with." Joe came down the ladder.

Lady Jane ran up the ladder and jumped through the open trap door. Kathleen heard a scuffle and a squeak, then the clatter of paws running across the floor.

"Oh, Joe, stop her! She's after a mouse."

"Don't worry. It has plenty of stuff to hide behind."

Miss Williams gave them a bucket of water, a broom, and an armful of rags. Joe helped Kathleen into the attic.

"It is hot," Kathleen said. "But it smells good, just the way an attic should smell." Kathleen began to dust a cabinet with a crank on it. "What's this?" she said.

Joe put down the broom. He lifted the hinged lid. "It's an old-time record player." Joe picked up a thick record from a stack on the floor and set it on the turntable. He turned the crank, and the record began to spin. When he lowered the needle the attic filled with the squawky sound of a Scotsman singing "Roamin' in the Gloamin'," and laughing to himself.

"It's the 'gloamin', all right." Joe swept the cobwebs from the window.

Kathleen peeked into an old leather

trunk. It was full of long dresses, mostly white, with embroidery and lace and wide ribbon sashes. She found one that was just a little too big for her and slipped it on over her polo shirt and jeans. It had big puffed sleeves and came down to the floor. Kathleen held up the skirt to keep it out of the dust. "Look, Joe!"

Joe swung an old army sword with a frayed gilt tassel. "On guard!"

Kathleen tried on two more dresses and a pair of little kid gloves. Some gold satin slippers with pointed toes and curved heels almost fitted. Kathleen folded the dresses carefully and put them back in the trunk.

A tall narrow doll house had hinges that let the whole front swing open. The furniture inside was tumbled around as if the mice had been playing there. Kathleen dusted the house and arranged the furniture in all the rooms. The tiny dolls were

made of china. The rubber bands which held their arms on had rotted. Kathleen was sure she could fix them if only she had the time.

Joe wanted to examine the old bicycle, but he reminded himself that he was sup-

posed to be cleaning. He swished the spiderwebs off it and went on to dust a stack of unframed oil paintings.

A big wooden sled leaned against one wall. "You could really have fun with this on the hills around here." Joe thumped it to see if it was still strong.

Kathleen dusted a pile of books. She kept finding books she wanted to look at. There was a fat copy of *The Water Babies* with beautiful pictures of the bottom of the sea.

Joe took the bucket of dirty water downstairs to empty it off the back porch. "Um-m, cinnamon!" Joe took a deep breath. Miss Williams had just taken an apple pie out of the oven.

"Lunch is ready, Joe," she said. "You and Kathleen can wash up in the bathroom. There are towels on the rack."

Joe guided Kathleen's feet onto the ladder. The cat jumped after them. All three

of them were very dirty. Lady Jane sat down and began to clean herself. Joe and Kathleen washed their faces and hands, but the fresh clothes were grimy now.

"I'd no idea that attic was so dusty," Miss Williams said.

Between bites of a ham and cheese sandwich, Joe asked, "Where did you get the bicycle?"

"It belonged to my brother," Miss Williams said. "Would you like to try riding it? You've worked enough for today."

"I've never ridden one just like it," said Joe, "but I guess it wouldn't be too different. I'd like to try."

During most of lunch Kathleen was quiet. She was thinking about the attic. As she started on the apple pie she asked, "Did you paint the pictures?"

"That was before the arthritis started in my hands," said Miss Williams. "Somewhere in the attic there's a box of paints

and brushes. You can have them if you like."

"Oil paints?"

Miss Williams smiled. "Oh, they're not hard to use. I can show you how. It's a shame to let them go to waste."

While Kathleen washed the dishes, Joe took the old bicycle down from the attic. He used a clothesline to lower it from the trap door.

After she put the dishes away Kathleen scraped the crumbs from the table. By then Joe had the bicycle on the front walk.

Miss Williams gave Kathleen an oil can to take to Joe, and they both went out to watch. Joe sat on the ground and felt the tires. He looked up sadly. "It's not just that they're flat, but the rubber is rotten."

"Leave the bicycle on the porch." Miss Williams looked even sadder than Joe. "Maybe we can get some tires for it."

Chapter Thirteen

JOE and Kathleen took their time walking back to the lake. Miss Williams had given them each a dollar, just as she had before. When she said, "Do come back again," they knew she meant it.

"Miss Williams didn't really want that attic cleaned," Joe said. "She just wanted to give us something to do."

"It was very dirty."

"But she didn't care whether we finished or not," Joe said.

"I want to go back and finish." Kathleen stopped to tie her shoelaces. "I like looking at the stuff in there."

"So do I, but let's not put on clean clothes next time. That sure was a mistake."

Kathleen looked down at her shirt and jeans. "Let's go to the laundromat tomorrow. We can shop at the general store while the clothes are washing."

Late in the afternoon they reached the shore. They found the *Good Luck* where they had left it in the little inlet. The afternoon sun still shone on the lake although the woods were in shadow. Joe turned the sail to catch the breeze.

A fast motorboat streaked by, towing a skier. It churned up the lake and sent huge waves rolling toward the *Good Luck*.

The little boat bounced. Kathleen was sure it would turn over. The rough water pulled the paddle from her grasp. Kathleen tried to hold on to it, but it slid out of her hands and floated away.

"I couldn't help it." Kathleen didn't dare look at Joe.

He tried to sail after the paddle, but it was soon out of sight.

Joe had to pay even more attention to the sail, now that Kathleen couldn't help steer with the paddle. Kathleen sat very still. When they reached the island she helped Joe pull the *Good Luck* onto the beach. She knew Joe was angry with her. Without saying a word he took the fishing lure and the drop line to his favorite spot on the point of rocks.

Kathleen sat on the beach beside the *Good Luck*.

Suddenly Joe began to shout, "Kath, Kath, look what I caught!"

"Shall I get out the frying pan?" Kathleen ran to see what sort of fish could make Joe so excited. He was bending over to scoop up his catch. Kathleen climbed over the rocks and reached Joe as he stood up. He held an old oar with a broken handle.

Kathleen looked at the oar and then at Joe.

He grinned. "Here, try your luck with

the drop line. I'm going to whittle the splinters off this thing. It ought to work just as well as the paddle."

Next day Joe and Kathleen loaded the *Good Luck* with the two garbage sacks full of dirty laundry. This time Kathleen was up front with the sail. Joe wanted to try out the oar he had fished from the lake. While he used the oar, he shouted commands to Kathleen.

"Turn it to catch the wind. No! Not like that. Careful!"

Kathleen was sure she would do better if Joe would only let her do it her own way.

When they reached the peninsula they hid the *Good Luck* near the shore and took the garbage sacks through the woods to the laundromat.

Kathleen bought a box of soap powder in the general store and poured half of it into the washing machine with their

clothes. Joe pushed a quarter in the slot, and they went back to get groceries.

Joe and Kathleen walked around the store looking at the shelves. Joe took down a jar of peanut butter. "We're running out," he said. "I never feel safe without it."

They bought bread and milk and raisins and then went to get their laundry.

There was water all over the floor of the laundromat. Soapsuds were bubbling out of the washing machine they had used. The machine had stopped, but the clothes were still wet and soapy.

"Maybe I put in too much soap," Kathleen said. "I'll just have to rinse the clothes in the lake."

As they were coming out of the laundromat with their sacks full of wet soapy clothes, they heard someone say, "What are you two doing here?"

It was Arthur Garvey.

Kathleen opened her mouth to answer, but Joe spoke first. "We're staying with a friend."

Arthur stared. "You look as if you've been sleeping in the woods. What's your friend's name?"

"None of your business." Joe glared at Arthur.

Water dripped from the sacks of soapy laundry and made a slimy, muddy pool on the ground.

"What do you think happened to that dumb cabin you built last summer?" jeered Arthur.

Joe looked at Arthur hard, but he didn't say anything.

Kathleen couldn't stand it. "Arthur," she said in a loud whisper, "how in the world did you get that *awful* tear in your pants?"

Arthur looked down at his pants, and Kathleen gave him a quick hard shove from behind. He slipped on the soapy,

slimy ground and fell on his face. "Run, Joe!" Kathleen said.

Together Joe and Kathleen raced down the highway. They ducked into the woods around the bend and walked along the old peninsula road. Then Joe stopped short. "Kath," he said, "you never should have done that."

"Why?" Kathleen asked. She was feeling proud of the way she threw Arthur off their trail.

"If we'd kept cool, Arthur might have believed we really were staying with a friend, but this way he knows something's funny. Now they'll be sure to look for us."

Kathleen felt as if nothing she did was ever right. "I'm sorry, Joe," she said.

Joe looked at her. Then he grinned. "Never mind, Kath. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I'm glad you pushed him in the mud. I only wish I'd done it."

Chapter Fourteen

WHEN Joe and Kathleen got back to the island they saw the red motorboat pulled up on the beach. Jo-Ann, Hank, and Charley ran to meet them.

"We came to say good-by," said Jo-Ann. "It's our last day here."

"Oh no!" said Kathleen and Joe together.

"We'll be back next year," said Hank, "unless our parents go to Europe the way yours did."

"In that case," said Jo-Ann, "you'll find us camping here on the island."

After Kathleen put the groceries away, Jo-Ann helped her rinse the soap out of the

wet clothes and spread them on the bushes to dry. "Come for a swim. It's my last chance."

Before Jo-Ann left in the boat with Hank and Charley she wrote her address on a piece of paper and gave it to Kathleen. "Write to me as soon as you can. I want to know what happens to you."

Joe and Kathleen watched the motorboat until it was gone.

After supper Kathleen folded the laundry and carried it up the hill to the cabin. Then she took Mouse out of the sleeping bag. She tucked him under her arm and walked to a cliff above the point of rocks.

At the top of the rocky cliff Kathleen sat down to watch the sunset. She propped Mouse against a clump of grass and started to braid a chain of the fat purple clover which grew among the rocks.

It was nearly dark now. Kathleen saw a star, but it was soon covered by a cloud.

She stumbled through the woods back to the cabin. Joe was already inside.

"Where were you?" he asked. "I was ready to go look for you."

"I was watching the sunset." Kathleen kicked off her shoes and slipped into the

sleeping bag. Then she remembered Mouse. She had forgotten him on the cliff!

It was quite dark now. Joe was not yet asleep. He heard Kathleen get up.

"What's the matter?"

"I forgot something outside." Kathleen didn't want to tell Joe it was Mouse.

"Get it tomorrow. I can hear thunder. There's going to be a storm."

Kathleen felt around in the dark for her shoes. "I'll be right back. Give me the flashlight."

Joe pulled the flashlight out of his sleeping bag and gave it to her.

After Kathleen went out Joe turned over and tried to sleep, but he couldn't. He kept thinking of how clumsy Kathleen was and how she was always getting lost.

Joe slid out of the sleeping bag and crawled out of the cabin. He could see the dim glow of the flashlight in the woods. "Kath, wait!"

Kathleen was glad to wait. It was scary in the dark. The flashlight didn't help much. She could see the tree trunks close by, but that was all. Far off there was a flash of lightning and a rumble of thunder. Joe came up to her. "Whatever it is, you'd better get it fast. Where did you leave it?"

"On the cliff above the point of rocks."

"Then you're going wrong." Joe turned left into the woods. Kathleen followed him. He took her straight to the top of the cliff. Kathleen swung the flashlight around. Mouse was there at the edge where she had left him. Kathleen ran to get him. Joe was right behind her. Just as Kathleen stretched out her hand for Mouse she tripped on a rock. Joe grabbed her and took the flashlight away. "You nearly smashed it!"

As she fell, Kathleen knocked Mouse off the edge of the cliff. She stood quite still. She couldn't even cry. Joe looked at her

face. Then he beamed the flashlight down into the darkness. He could see that crazy toy Mouse halfway down the cliff, hanging onto the branch of a bush with his curved arms. It was beginning to rain, and the wind was rising. Any minute Mouse would be blown into the lake.

"Hold the flashlight!" Joe said. He climbed down the cliff, feeling for each toehold.

The flashlight beam did not reach far. Soon Kathleen could no longer see Joe. Now and then she heard the rattle of gravel. "Ow!" Joe said suddenly.

"Are you hurt?" Kathleen called down.

There was a silence. She could almost hear her heart beating. What could be wrong? "Joe," Kathleen called again, "are you all right?"

"Not really. I think this Mouse of yours bit me. He never did like me."

Kathleen laughed with relief. She lay

on her stomach and craned her neck over the top of the cliff, pointing the flashlight in the direction of Joe's voice. After what seemed a very long time she saw Joe climbing out of the darkness. He had tied Mouse's long legs around his neck, and Mouse flapped head downward behind his back.

Kathleen grabbed Joe's hand and pulled him over the edge of the cliff. He was out of breath, but he looked very pleased with himself. "Here's your old Mouse," he said. "You should take better care of him." Joe untied the floppy legs, straightened them carefully, and handed Mouse back to her.

Kathleen was so glad to see Joe safe that she couldn't say a word. She hugged Mouse and looked at Joe with shining eyes.

The rain fell in fat drops. There was another crash of thunder. Joe took back the flashlight and led the way to the cabin.

Once inside the cabin they looked out the door. Joe loved thunderstorms. Now the rain came down in white sheets. A flash of lightning lit up the woods and there was a loud crash of thunder.

"Something on the island must have been hit," said Joe.

"I'm glad it wasn't us," Kathleen said.

The roof of the cabin leaked a little in one corner. "We'll have to stuff more pine needles there." Joe prodded the wet place with his finger.

After a while the thunder echoed away in the hills across the lake. Still the rain did not stop. It kept on all through the night.

Chapter Fifteen

THE MORNING was gray and wet. Kathleen and Joe put on bathing suits to go down to the cave where they stored their food. Before this the level of the water in the cave had been a little lower each morning. But on this morning the water was higher than it had been the night before.

It was wonderful fishing weather. Joe took the drop line and walked all the way to the end of the point of rocks. While he fished, Kathleen built a fireplace on the beach. She had the sides and back finished when Joe came back with a big rock bass. "Help me put the roof on." She pointed to a flat slab of rock.

Joe put down the fish and helped Kathleen lift the rock into place. "Leave a crack at the back for a chimney," he said.

Kathleen set the can of Sterno in the fireplace. In spite of the rain, the fish fried until it was brown and crackly and delicious.

"One good thing about the rain," said Joe, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, "Arthur won't be able to get anybody to come looking for us while it lasts."

After breakfast they went swimming. The water was warm, but it wasn't much fun to come out of it into the rain.

When they went to get food for lunch they noticed that the water in the cave was even higher. "Let's move the food to the cabin," said Kathleen. "It's not hot today."

It was even getting chilly. After they had taken the food to the cabin Kathleen changed from her wet bathing suit to dry clothes and a sweater.

Joe also got dressed and climbed a tall pine tree. Now he had a view far out onto the lake.

"Hey, Kath," he shouted down, "there's all sorts of stuff floating on the lake. I think a couple of boats have been cast loose."

Kathleen started to climb up after him. "Get down," yelled Joe. "This is no time for you to get stuck in a tree."

"But I want to see, too."

"Go and check if the *Good Luck* is O.K."

Kathleen started down the hill toward the beach. The dripping branches slapped her in the face, and she nearly fell on the slippery ground.

Carefully Joe climbed down from the tree. When he reached the ground Kathleen was running up the hill.

Joe guessed what was wrong just by looking at her. "The *Good Luck* is gone," he said.

Kathleen nodded. She knew if she tried

to talk she would start to cry. Joe went down to the beach with her. They searched all around the shore. The rain was coming down harder now. Their clothes were getting soaked. They went back to the cabin.

Hour after hour went by. The wind bent the thin trees to the ground and nearly snapped the big ones in half. The roof of the pine needle cabin was leaking in two more places. When it began to get dark Joe turned on the flashlight, and they ate a cold supper in the cabin.

"Thank goodness," Kathleen said, "the sleeping bags are waterproof." She pushed Mouse to the bottom of her sleeping bag. She could just feel him with her toes.

When at last Kathleen fell asleep she kept having mixed-up dreams. In one of them Mrs. McCafferty was sailing in the *Good Luck* with Kathleen's little sister. Kathleen was swimming alongside, trying

hard to keep up with the boat. When she tried to climb in, Mrs. McCafferty lifted a heavy oar and pushed her down into the lake. Kathleen woke screaming.

A dim light came through the doorway of the cabin. Outside it was still raining. It was very wet inside. The pine needles were soggy. Water dripped from several new leaks in the roof.

Joe was leaning on his elbow, looking out at the rain. "Doesn't the lake look closer, Kath?"

She looked out. The lake seemed to be just past the first row of trees at the edge of the clearing. Kathleen put on her wet bathing suit and went out.

She couldn't believe her eyes. The island had shrunk. All that was left of it was the clearing around their cabin. The cave was far under the lake. The point of rocks and the pebbly beach were gone. Here and there a treetop poked out of the water.

And it was still raining!

What would they do now? Soon the whole island would be under water. The lake looked gray and angry. All sorts of things floated on its muddy surface. Broken boats, pieces of rope, an automobile tire, even the door of a house went twisting by in the swift current.

Joe had put on his swimsuit. He put his foot in the water. "It's cold, but I guess we can swim in it all right." Joe tried to sound calm. The lake was so wide now that he could barely see the shore through the rain.

Kathleen looked at the dirty water and tried to imagine swimming in it for hours and hours.

Joe grabbed her arm and pointed. "Look!"

A square wooden dock, mounted on oildrums, had been drifting past. For a minute it became tangled in a treetop. Joe

jumped into the murky water and swam out to the dock. It was hard to swim through the underwater trees. When he got to the dock Joe held tight to a leafy branch that stuck out of the water.

"Kathleen!" he yelled. "Get the stuff from the cabin. Hurry!"

Kathleen crammed Mouse and all the clothes in one sleeping bag. She put the food in the other bag and rolled up both bags and tied them.

"Throw them to me," called Joe.

Kathleen lifted one of the heavy bags over her head with both arms and pitched it with all her might in the direction of the dock. Joe let go of the branch for an instant and caught it. "Good girl! Now the other one."

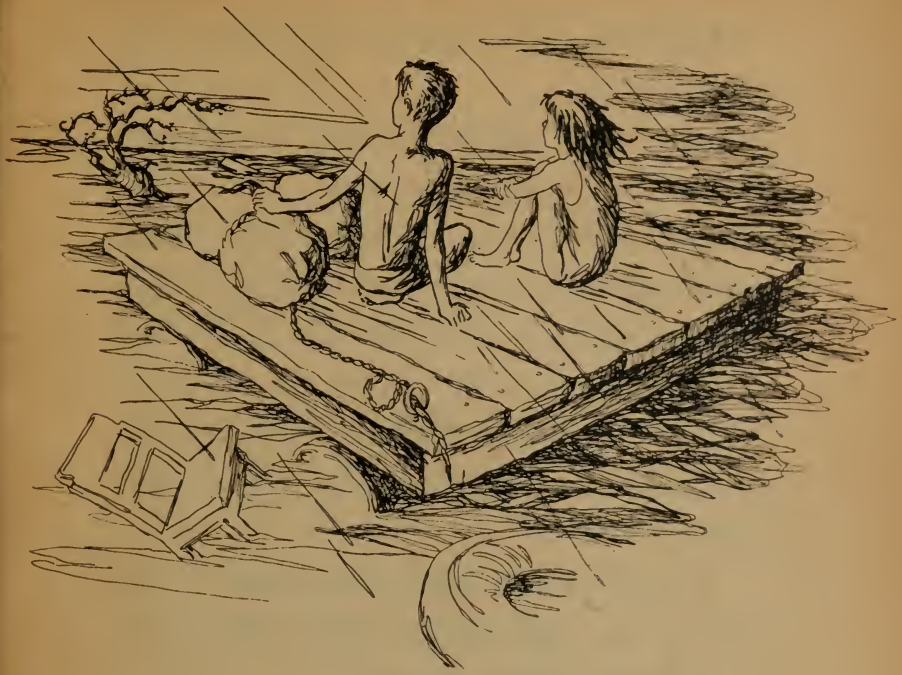
This time Kathleen was not so lucky. The sleeping bag fell into the treetop. At the same time the dock began to drift away from the tree.

Kathleen swam through the branches and floating bits of junk to where the sleeping bag was caught in the tree. She grabbed hold of it and tried to reach the dock. The branches held her ankles. Kathleen kicked and struggled.

"Catch!" Something hit Kathleen in the face. She grabbed it. Joe had thrown her the end of a rope that was tied to an iron ring on the dock. Now he hauled her and the sleeping bag in like two big fish. As Kathleen climbed onto the dock it turned and started drifting downstream.

"I guess that's the end of our pine needle cabin," said Joe as they moved away from the island. Kathleen hugged her knees under her chin. She was cold in the wet bathing suit.

Although the dock twisted and turned as it floated along, it traveled fast. Joe began to enjoy the trip, but he could see that Kathleen was miserable.



He knew the cure for that. Joe pulled out a can of beans and opened it with the can opener on his knife. "Grab a spoon, Kath."

They sat in the middle of the dock, tucked the can of beans between them, and dug in. The dock rocked up and down.

Kathleen pulled out the big plastic jug of milk.

"Not now," said Joe. "We'll only spill it. Let's work on the raisins."

One by one they popped the raisins into their mouths, trying to make them last as long as possible. The lake was wider than they had ever seen it. They had been drifting in the direction of the peninsula, but they couldn't see it anywhere.

"I think I see trees down there." Joe looked into the cloudy water. "We must be right over the peninsula."

The clumsy raft came to a stop. "It's stuck on another tree. Now we can drink our milk." Kathleen took out the cups.

As they sipped their milk they noticed all the things swirling down the lake. More broken bits of boats and docks coasted past. A picnic table sailed by. Then, out of the rain and mist, a big gray

motor launch appeared. It was coming toward them.

"Joe, it's the Lake Warden! What'll we do?"

The boat stopped about twenty feet away. "Hey, there!" the Warden called. "You'll be all right now. I'll throw you a life ring."

Joe did not want to be rescued. "Don't bother, thank you," he shouted back.

The Warden was not sure he had heard right. "Where are your parents?"

"I don't know," yelled Joe.

"You'll have to come with me. I can't leave you here."

There was no use arguing. The Warden tied a rope to a cork ring and tossed it onto the dock. Then Joe tied the sleeping bags to the ring and threw them into the water. While the Warden pulled in the bags, Joe and Kathleen swam to his boat.

Chapter Sixteen

JOE and Kathleen sat on the clean white seats of the motor launch. Joe had a feeling that things were going to be unpleasant very soon. The Warden steered the boat to the headquarters of the Power and Light Company near the dam. The dock there was under water. The Warden brought the boat right up to his house on the hill and tied it to the porch railing.

Joe thought it might help to make friends with the Warden. "You seem to be flooded," he said.

"Flooded!" the Warden said. "Of course we're flooded. If it weren't for the dam, all Hawley would be under water."

"Oh!" said Kathleen. "Is Miss Williams all right?"

"You mean the old lady who lives alone in that big old house on Paupack Street?" The Warden gave Kathleen a sharp look.

"Yes."

"As far as I know she's O.K. That house is up high."

Kathleen felt better. She and Joe picked up their sleeping bags and the Warden led them into his living room.

A man and a woman were sitting there. The woman jumped out of her chair. "Good heavens, John, what's this?"

The Warden rubbed his chin. "I honestly don't know. I found them having a picnic on a floating dock." He turned to Kathleen and Joe. "This is my wife, Mrs. Grenson. She'll look after you."

"Come, children," said Mrs. Grenson, "you'd better get out of those wet suits."

"Our clothes are in here." Kathleen unrolled a soggy, pine-needly sleeping bag on the floor. The clothes in the plastic

sacks were still fairly dry, but Mouse was soaked.

Mrs. Grenson stared. "Would you mind taking those sleeping bags out to the porch? Then you can change your clothes in the bedroom." She picked Mouse up by one soggy leg. "What's this, dear? Well, whatever it is, I'm sure we can put it on the porch."

"Oh, no! That's Mouse!" Kathleen reached for Mouse and wrapped him in her sweater.

When they came out of the bedroom, Kathleen and Joe found two bowls of tomato soup steaming on the kitchen table. Neither of them liked tomato soup.

"Sit down, children," Mrs. Grenson said, "and get something warm inside you."

Joe sat down and stirred the soup. Mr. Grenson came into the kitchen with the man from the living room. They both looked hard at the children.

"This is Mr. Carey, the Lake Superintendent," said the Warden. "You can tell him your story."

"What story?" asked Joe.

"How you happened to be on that dock, what else?" said Mr. Carey.

"We were camping on Epply Island," explained Joe, "and our boat was washed away. When we saw the dock, we thought it would make a good raft. It did, but it got stuck in a tree. I was going to dive under it to get it loose, but Mr. Grenson came along and made us get in his boat."

"Just a minute, young man," Mr. Carey said. "Do you mean you were camping alone on that island in this flood?"

"We didn't know there'd be a flood," said Joe.

"Where are your parents?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Carey looked ready to explode. "What do you mean, you don't know?"

Joe and Kathleen looked at each other. "We really don't know exactly," Joe said.

"Are you staying with friends here," Mr. Carey asked, "or with relatives?"

"They seem to be friends of Miss Williams," interrupted Mr. Grenson. "Maybe she could give us some information."

Mr. Carey sighed. "You may be right. I'm getting nowhere this way. How are the roads?"

"I think we can make it in the truck."

A green pickup truck was parked on the drive behind the house. Mr. Carey and Mr. Grenson sat on the front seat, and Joe and Kathleen squatted among coils of rope in the back. Any other time the ride would have been fun, but now it was only the first step back to Brooklyn and Mrs. McCafferty.

They bumped along in silence through the green woods. It had stopped raining.

The sun was out, and the leaves were wet and shiny. A hawk flew over the road.

All too soon the truck stopped in front of Miss Williams' house. Mr. Carey went up the walk to the porch. Miss Williams and Lady Jane were sitting there looking out at the dripping trees.

"Why, Frank Carey," said Miss Williams. "How are you? I haven't seen you in ages."

Mr. Carey climbed the porch steps. "I hate to trouble you, Miss Williams, but we have two children here. We found them on a dock floating on the lake. We can't find out anything about them, but they seem to know you."

Miss Williams stared at the pickup truck. "Is it Joe and Kathleen?"

Kathleen climbed out of the truck and ran up the walk. "Oh, Miss Williams, don't let them send us back to Brooklyn!"

Miss Williams sat up straight and stopped rocking. "Maybe you should tell me all about it," she said.

It was easy to tell Miss Williams about Mrs. McCafferty and the stewed tomatoes, and how terrible it was to have to stay in the city in the summer. Mr. Carey and Mr. Grenson listened while the children told their story. Joe told the main part, and Kathleen added details. Miss Williams did not interrupt.

When they had finished, Miss Williams said, "Joe, you and Kathleen know quite well that what you did was very wrong. Now I want you to give me your telephone number in Brooklyn, and I'll try to find out what we should do."

Joe told Miss Williams the number of the telephone at home.

"You'd better give me your grandmother's number too," she said. She put Lady Jane on the floor and went into the house.

Kathleen sat on the porch steps and buried her face in the soggy Mouse. How could she have thought that Miss Williams would help? She was just like all the other grownups. Now she and Joe would be sent home to be punished. Kathleen wished that she had never met Miss Williams.

At last the screen door banged. Miss Williams had come out again. She went back to her chair.

"Well?" Mr. Carey said.

"I telephoned Mrs. McCafferty. She really thought these children were with their grandmother. At least, she thought so until this morning when their grandmother called to see how they were. Then the poor woman was frantic. She telephoned the police, and she cabled the children's parents in Paris. Mr. and Mrs. Dennis were going to fly right home. Luckily I was able to reach them at their hotel." Miss Williams smiled. "That was fun. I never tele-

phoned Paris before. Now they're going on to London, and their vacation won't be spoiled after all." Miss Williams rocked back and forth in her chair. She looked pleased with herself.

"Haven't you forgotten something?" Mr. Carey asked.

"I don't think so." Miss Williams went on rocking.

"Who's going to take the children back where they belong?"

"Oh," said Miss Williams, "didn't I tell you? They're going to spend the rest of the summer with me. They have to finish tidying my attic."

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Secret Summer

"Joe, we shouldn't have run away!"

Kathleen was suddenly afraid. But her brother knew there was no turning back now. Every minute the bus was taking them farther away from their home in Brooklyn.

"Just think, Kath," Joe said. "We can camp out at the lake all by ourselves. It will be a lot more fun than staying in the city all summer long."

"A lot more fun," thought Kathleen, "and a lot more scary!"

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